

Message Text

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ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 L-03 CIAE-00 COME-00

DODE-00 DOTE-00 FMC-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 CG-00

DLOS-09 OES-07 OIC-02 PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 AF-10

ARA-06 EA-07 NEA-10 LAB-04 SIL-01 /108 W

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FM AMEMBASSY LONDON

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4570

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EWWT, PORG, IMCO

SUBJECT: IMCO COUNCIL MEETING, MAY 23-27, 1977

REF: LONDON 8675

1. SUMMARY. IMCO COUNCIL APPROVED WITHOUT DEBATE US-PROPOSED SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE ON TANKER POLLUTION AND SECRETARY GENERAL'S PROPOSED BUDGET. LIBERIAN PROPOSAL TO CHANGE ASSESSMENT FORMULA WAS REFERRED TO US-PROPOSED WORKING GROUP, WHOSE RECOMMENDATIONS WOULD GO BEFORE 1979 ASSEMBLY. OTHER SUBJECTS WHICH AROUSED HEATED DISCUSSION WERE METHOD OF ELECTION OF NEW MEMBERS TO ENLARGED COUNCIL AND COLLAPSE OF ANTICIPATED PRIVATE FINANCING FOR NEW HEADQUARTERS BUILDING. END SUMMARY.

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2. REFTEL REPORTED DOT SECRETARY ADAMS' STATEMENT TO IMCO COUNCIL AND REACTIONS TO IT. AT SUBSEQUENT SESSIONS COUNCIL APPROVED PROGRAM OF MEETINGS AND DIPLOMATIC CONFERENCE TO CONSIDER TANKER POLLUTION AND SAFETY PROPOSED BY US AND EARLIER ENDORSED BY MARITIME SAFETY COMMITTEE.

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3. OTHER SUBJECT OF MAJOR INTEREST TO US WAS LIBERIAN PROPOSAL TO CHANGE ASSESSMENT FORMULA FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO IMCO. IN PRESENTING PROPOSAL, LIBERIAN OBSERVER ALLEGED THAT LIBERIA WOULD FACE "SERIOUS SITUATION" IF PRESENT ASSESSMENT METHOD CONTINUES. HE NOTED THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO REVIEW OF IMCO'S METHOD OF ASSESSMENT SINCE

1965 AND ADDED THAT IN VIEW OF HARDSHIPS LDCS FACE IN MEETING OBLIGATIONS TO INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS, TIME NOW APPROPRIATE TO RECONSIDER IMCO ASSESSMENT FORMULA. HE STRESSED THAT LIBERIAN FORMULA WOULD BENEFIT MOST LDCS.

4. USDEL ARGUED THAT PRESENT FORMULA JUSTIFIED BY FACT THAT GREAT BULK OF IMCO WORK INVOLVES MATTERS OF MOST IMMEDIATE CONCERN TO SHIP OPERATORS AND CREWS, THAT NONE OF UN SPECIALIZED AGENCIES IN TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS FIELD USE LIBERIAN-TYPE FORMULA, THAT LIBERIAN PROPOSAL DOES NOT ADDRESS ANY LDC-DEVELOPED COUNTRY ISSUE (MAJOR BENEFIT WOULD GO TO DEVELOPED SHIPPING COUNTRIES PLUS TWO FLAG OF CONVENIENCE COUNTRIES), THAT RISING LIBERIAN CONTRIBUTIONS ONLY REFLECT GROWING LIBERIAN-FLAG FLEET, AND THAT ANY REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT METHOD SHOULD STUDY WIDE RANGE OF POSSIBLE FORMULAS. LIBERIAN PROPOSAL ALSO STRONGLY ATTACKED BY FRENCH, WHO URGED LIBERIA TO PASS COSTS ON TO SHIPOWNERS, AND SOVIETS, WHO CRITICIZED SAFETY AND POLLUTION RECORD OF LIBERIAN FLEET. OPPOSITION ALSO VOICED BY FRG, CANADA, ITALY AND ARGENTINA.

5. LIBERIAN PROPOSAL RECEIVED ACTIVE SUPPORT OF NIGERIAN DELEGATION AND SEEMINGLY PRO FORMA SUPPORT FROM OTHER LDCS (INDIA, INDONESIA, BRAZIL), WHILE PRC VOICED SUPPORT "IN PRINCIPLE" (PRC WOULD PAY MORE IF IT WERE ADOPTED). MOST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM LIBERIAN PROPOSAL EITHER LIMITED SELVES TO EXPRESSION OF SUPPORT FOR GENERAL REVIEW OF ASSESSMENT FORMULA (UK, NORWAY) OR EXPRESSED NO OPINION (JAPAN). GREECE, HOWEVER, PRESENTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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ITS OWN ALTERNATIVE FORMULA.

6. AFTER DEBATE, COUNCIL ADOPTED PROPOSAL OF USDEL TO REFER MATTER TO AD HOC WORKING GROUP CONSISTING OF COUNCIL MEMBERS PLUS LIBERIA. WORKING GROUP DIRECTED TO CONSIDER LIBERIAN FORMULA AND ANY OTHER FORMULAS PROPOSED WORKING GROUP WOULD REPORT TO FORTIETH SESSION OF COUNCIL (SPRING 1978), WHICH WOULD MAKE ANY RECOMMENDATIONS TO ELEVENTH ASSEMBLY (TO BE HELD IN 1979). COUNCIL DECISION, WHICH POSTPONES ACTION AND DIFFUSES CONCENTRATION ON LIBERIAN FORMULA ADOPTED 14-0 WITH 2 ABSTENTIONS. IT APPEARS, HOWEVER, THAT LIBERIA WILL ATTEMPT TO HAVE NOVEMBER 1977 ASSEMBLY CONSIDER ITS PROPOSAL, DESPITE QUESTIONABLE CONSTITUTIONALITY OF SUCH A MOVE.

7. COUNCIL DEBATED AT LENGTH QUESTION OF HOW TO ELECT ADDITIONAL SIX COUNCIL MEMBERS TO FILL NEW COUNCIL SEATS WHICH WILL BE CREATED WHEN 1974 AMENDMENTS TO IMCO CONVENTION COME INTO FORCE IN APRIL 1978. IN ATTEMPT TO

MEET DESIRES OF LDCS AND SAVE EXTRA EXPENSE, US PROPOSED
THAT NOVEMBER 1977 ASSEMBLY ELECT ADDITIONAL MEMBERS,

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WITH UNDERSTANDING THAT THEY WOULD NOT TAKE THEIR SEATS
UNTIL APRIL 1978. ALTHOUGH PROPOSAL ENJOYED NEAR-
UNIVERSAL SUPPORT, USDEL WITHDREW IT AFTER NIGERIAN DELE-
GATION REFUSED TO ACCEPT ANY SOLUTION OTHER THAN SECOND
SPECIAL ASSEMBLY SESSION TO ELECT NEW COUNCIL MEMBERS AND
MADE CLEAR THAT NIGERIA WOULD CHALLENGE US PROPOSAL ON
CONSTITUTIONAL GROUNDS. PROPOSAL WAS REINTRODUCED BY
POLAND AND FRANCE, HOWEVER, AND COUNCIL BY 13-1-4 VOTE
RECOMMENDED IT TO ASSEMBLY.

8. ANOTHER SUBJECT WHICH RECEIVED LENGTHY DISCUSSION WAS
NEW HEADQUARTERS BUILDING. BRITISH DELEGATION INFORMED
COUNCIL THAT PRIVATE DEVELOPER HAD BEEN UNABLE TO OBTAIN
PRIVATE FINANCING FOR NEW HEADQUARTERS AND THAT HMG HAD
DECIDED TO FINANCE BUILDING OUT OF UK GOVERNMENT FUNDS.
UNCERTAINTY REMAINS, HOWEVER, CONCERNING SITE; HMG IS
STILL NEGOTIATING TO PURCHASE PRESENTLY CONTEMPLATED SITE
BUT MAY HAVE TO OFFER SUBSTITUTE PROPERTY OWNED BY HMG IF
NEGOTIATIONS FAIL. CHANGE OF SITE COULD DELAY COMPLETION
OF CONSTRUCTION UNTIL L982. MANY DELEGATIONS EXPRESSED
DISMAY AT PROSPECT OF FURTHER DELAY AND OVER GENERAL
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BRITISH HANDLING OF PROJECT. COUNCIL REQUESTED HMG TO GIVE FIRM REPLY CONCERNING SITE WITHIN TWO MONTHS AND DIRECTED AD HOC WORKING GROUP ON HEADQUARTERS TO DISCUSS INTERIM UK ASSISTANCE TO IMCO WITH HMG, SINCE MORE AND MORE MEETINGS WILL HAVE TO BE HELD OUTSIDE PRESENT HEAD-QUARTERS BUILDING, DUE TO INCREASED MEMBERSHIP OF COUNCIL AND OPENING TO ALL MEMBERS OF MSC AFTER APRIL 1, 1978.

9. DESPITE EXPRESSIONS OF CONCERN OVER INCREASE IN BUDGET, COUNCIL APPROVED SECRETARY GENERAL'S BUDGET PROPOSALS (AFTER INCORPORATION OF A FEW MINOR ECONOMY MEASURES RECOMMENDED BY PRE-COUNCIL BUDGETARY WORKING GROUP). PROPOSED SALARY INCREASE FOR GENERAL SERVICES STAFF WAS WHITTLED DOWN FROM ORIGINAL 15.1 TO 14.5 PERCENT. DECISION ON HEADQUARTERS INSTALLATION FUND (WHICH US OPPOSED) POSTPONED UNTIL NOVEMBER COUNCIL MEETING, WHEN MORE INFORMATION ON CONSTRUCTION SCHEDULE MAY BE AVAILABLE.

10. OTHER AGENDA ITEMS WERE GENERALLY APPROVED OR NOTED IN ROUTINE FASHION.

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